

SACRED SATIRE: ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS IN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE - A FOCUS ON THE 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES

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Abstract

The 2024 Olympic Games, held in Paris France, have sparked a global conversation about the intersection of art, religion, and freedom of expression. This paper explores the ethical implications of artistic expression, particularly when satire intersects with religious beliefs. It examines the role of satire as a tool for social commentary and potential for offense when it challenges sacred tenets. The study applies both fundamental and complementary data collection techniques. It evaluates its contemplations via the Interfaith Dialogue Theory. The generalizations and conclusions were drawn based on a qualitative analysis and synthesis of the gathered data using hermeneutical and content analysis approach. The observations indicate that the Olympic Games, traditionally celebrated for respecting diverse religious beliefs and fostering unity, faced significant criticism for its 2024 opening ceremony held in Paris. The event was condemned for its perceived wokeness and for allegedly disrespecting the Christian faith by associating Leonardo da Vinci's depiction of the Last Supper with transgender and homosexual themes. Despite the artistic director's defense that the intention was not to mock Christianity but to celebrate the Greek god Dionysus and highlight France's cultural heritage, many countries, religious groups particularly the Islamic and Christian faith, and public figures, found the ceremony to be a satire mocking the Christians Lord's Supper, and thus unacceptable and condemnable. As a result, a major sponsor of the Games withdrew its support; it also made France to be perceived with contempt and disdain in the global landscape. This study recommends comprehensive review processes; cultural sensitivity training; stakeholder engagement; clear guidelines and policies; public communication and transparency; alongside engagement with religious and cultural experts, to avert similar occurrences in subsequent Olympic Games.

Keywords: Satire, Artistic Expression, Religious Tolerance, Olympic Games, Sacred

Introduction

In a world increasingly connected yet diverse, public events like the Olympic Games should serve as platforms for unity rather than division. Promoting religious tolerance in these settings is crucial to fostering mutual respect and understanding among different faiths and even cultural settings. To this end, host countries and global sports directors ought to ensure that no religious group is disrespected or marginalized, by upholding the values of inclusivity and harmony, essential for a peaceful coexistence.

The 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony intended to be a celebration of global unity and diversity regrettably fell short in adhering to principles of religious and cultural tolerance. Various segments of the ceremony, which were meant to showcase the richness of different cultures, instead led to unintended offence and alienation. Misrepresentations of certain religious symbols, particularly the Leonardo da Vinci's illustration of the Christian's Lord's supper; combined with a lack of sensitivity towards Christian's cultural traditions, marred the event, sparking criticism from various communities around the world. This oversight not only overshadowed the spirit of the Games but also highlighted the ongoing challenges of achieving

true inclusivity on such a global stage. It equally captures vividly a gross act of religious intolerance.

Religious intolerance impedes the ability of a society to be democratic, welcoming, open-minded, and accepting. It equally breaches the spirits of sportsmanship in Global Sporting events like the Olympic Games. Canadian Human Rights Commission (2023), to this effect, highlights that the ability of an individual to freely practice their religion without being abused, segregated or marginalized, is a fundamental human right: It is enshrined in both international and domestic laws, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Predictably, Sherwood (2020) avers that religious intolerance is a more significant contributor to prejudice than race. Thus, juxtaposing that attitudes towards faith fuel negative perceptions more than ethnicity or nationality.

Germane to the aforementioned context, Hogemann (2021) suggests that religious intolerance is an extreme form of rejecting or devaluing the differences in beliefs, practices, or identities that others possess. Essentially, it implies that when people or groups are intolerant of different religions, they are completely denying the legitimacy and value of others' existence and perspectives. Hudson (2023) argues that religious intolerance is evolving in the contemporary world, particularly within institutions that traditionally uphold religious values. She cites the controversy at some selected universities in American society where students are challenging Christian group's right to express beliefs that do not affirm LGBTQ lifestyles, despite such institution's Catholic foundation. The author suggests that this reflects a broader societal trend where religious beliefs, especially those conflicting with popular social views, face increasing opposition and are seen as intolerant or discriminatory. Given this recent development, it is not surprising the derogatory and salacious depiction of the Christian's Lord's Supper by the directors of the 2024 Olympic Games at the opening ceremony. No institution, religious faith, or individual has the right to impose their beliefs and practices on others, nor to abuse other's beliefs and practices. Everyone is entitled to their own worldview.

Levinovitz (2015) contends that religious tolerance, while seemingly virtuous, can be problematic as it often prioritizes coexistence over meaningful dialogue. Levinovitz proposes that this approach can lead to superficial respect rather than genuine understanding, fostering an environment where deep-seated beliefs are left unchallenged. He defends that tolerance, rather than encouraging critical examination and growth, may allow harmful or irrational beliefs to persist unexamined, thus impeding both individual and societal progress. However, his critique of religious tolerance risks supporting religious intolerance by dismissing tolerance as mere superficiality. Emphasizing that tolerance prioritizes coexistence, rather than robust critique, overlooks the essential role of respect in maintaining peaceful and diverse societies. Tolerance allows for the coexistence of differing viewpoints without necessitating their immediate confrontation, which can actually encourage more thoughtful and inclusive dialogue overtime. Furthermore, tolerance provides a pragmatic approach to managing the complexity of pluralistic societies, where imposing uniform standards of belief could lead to greater conflict and suppression of freedom; especially that of the minority.

In his peculiar study, Murray (1965) identifies the major problem associated with religious freedom as the challenges of reconciling this freedom with the need for societal cohesion. He maintains that while religious freedom is a crucial right, it can sometimes lead to tensions and conflicts when diverse beliefs and practices interact. The challenge lies in balancing individual

freedom with the need for a shared public order that respects and integrates this diversity without undermining social stability. Murray ultimately streamlines that religious freedom is a fundamental human right essential for a just and democratic society: Contending that genuine freedom of religion allows individuals to follow their own consciences and beliefs without coercion, thereby fostering a more pluralistic and respectful community. Conversely, the scandalous depiction of the Christian's Lord's Supper at the 2024 opening ceremony of the Olympic Games is not targeting at fostering inclusivity, but a slight on Christianity as well as a satire mocking Christian faith.

Since Limon et al (2014) and Ezirim (2021) declare that religious intolerance leads to series of conflicts that claims people's lives along with the destruction of properties, and also affects the fabric of harmony, solidarity and development in any given setting; this study advocates for sensitivity in public expressions, emphasizing that the dignity of all religions should be protected to prevent unnecessary offense and maintain the integrity of shared communal spaces. To achieve its focal point, this article incorporates both initial and ancillary data collection methods. It evaluates the work through the lens of Interfaith Dialogue Theory, and the conclusions were qualitatively delineated using hermeneutical and content analysis approaches.

The Intrinsic Value of the Olympic Games

Abrahams et al (2024) underscore that Olympic Games is the athletic festival that originated in ancient Greece and was revived in the late 19th century. The Olympic Games have come to be regarded as the world's foremost sports competition. The authors accentuate that of all the games held throughout Greece, the Olympic Games were the most famous. They underline that the Olympic Games, held every four years between August 6 and September 19, were a significant event in Greek history, so much so that time was measured by Olympiads. The authors spotlight that the games were a key part of a religious festival held in honour of Zeus at Olympia by the City-state of Elis in the North Western Peloponnese.

International Olympic Committee (2024) illustrates that the goal of the Olympic Movement is to create a peaceful and better world by educating young people through sports, which are practiced without any form of discrimination. The committee stresses that this vision is guided by the Olympic spirit, which emphasizes mutual understanding, friendship, solidarity and fair play. The organization equally avers that:

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. (p. 1).

This posits that Olympism which is the philosophy of life that forms the foundation of the Olympic Movement which equally governs the Olympic Games promotes values such as excellence, respect, and friendship. Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the elation of diligence cum persistence, the enlightening virtue of good example, and the regard for universally accepted core ethical principles. Thus, the ultimate goal of Olympism is to promote a peaceful and better world through the practice of sport.

Hunter (2018) expounds that Olympism recognizes, extols and appreciates individual effort. It does not tolerate discrimination among nations, races, political systems, classes, and other related settings. The author posits that Olympism streamlines that as human kind build awareness and accentuate mankind's commonality; they must realize that human beings are all

interconnected in this world. Hence, while the connections between individuals on a global scale can be intricate, elusive, and challenging to discern, examining individual's behavioural patterns as world citizens can bridge these gaps and foster shared understanding.

Saini (2024) elucidates that Olympics represent much more than just a sporting event; they embody the spirit of Olympism, a philosophy that transcends mere competition to promote values of excellence, friendship, and respect alongside serving as a platform for global harmony cum promoting a sense of cultural unity. The author affirms that the Olympic Games serve as a horizon for advancing social causes like gender equality, environmental protection, and inclusivity; fostering global unity in an increasingly divided world.

Olympic Games intrinsic value in fostering harmony and solidarity is equally reflected in the fact that during each Olympic Games competition, all the athletes from all over the world are accommodated in a common Olympic village without any form of segregation, discrimination or marginalization as Christiansen et al (2014) state. More so, the authors delineate that foods and services within the Olympic village at every Olympic Games are free of charge; capturing the true essence of “being human”. Furthermore, the lightening of the Olympic flame during the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, rooted in the ancient Games of Olympia, Greece, symbolizes purity, life, and the enduring spirit of humanity's pursuit of excellence. According to Hogeback (2019) and Imbo (2024), it represents peace, unity, and the connection between ancient and modern civilizations. The flame's journey from Olympia to the host city, culminating in the torch relay and the lighting of the cauldron, embodies the passing of values across generations and nations. This beacon of hope and inspiration marks the official start of the games, encouraging athletes to strive for excellence, respect, and friendship.

Data-Driven Investigations

The 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony sparked significant controversy due to its depiction of the Christian Lord's Supper in a manner deemed disrespectful by many. The portrayal, featuring drag queens and a prominent LGBTQ+ figure, was seen by numerous viewers as a mockery of a central Christian sacrament. This incident drew widespread condemnation from religious groups worldwide, who argued that the ceremony's content clashes with the core principles of Olympism, which traditionally promote unity, respect, and tolerance as already portrayed in this study. Critics contend that the event undermined these values by alienating a significant portion of the global audience and instigating religious offence.

In this regard, Frambery-Lacobone (2024) exclaims that the conference of Bishops of France perceived the depiction of the Christian's Lord's Supper at the 2024 Olympic Opening Ceremony, as “scenes of derision and mockery of Christianity” (p. 2). Hall (2024) observes that the Olympics opening ceremony sparked outrage with drag queens parodying Last Supper: Thus, he avers that it was completely woke. He declares that Elon Musk, Harrison Faulkner, and Riley Gaines condemned the display in various ways including a sign of the cultural decay in western civilization; extremely disrespectful to Christians and a sinful act that attracts God's judgment. Ex-transgender influencer, Oli London (cited by Hall) described the scene in his words, thus: “Olympics openly mocks Jesus' Last Supper as drag queens dressed as women play the role of disciples while a plus size woman appears in the middle symbolizing Jesus wearing a giant crown” (p. 3). He then highlights that the Olympics has basically morphed into one long drag show: Stressing that it has also gone completely woke.

Desk (2024) attests that Paris Olympics 2024 commenced on July 26 with a four-hour duration opening ceremony. However, the parody of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper did not sit well with

social media, which labeled it as the “worst ever” (p.1). Desk observes that amid the ongoing backlash, a resurfaced video of the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony sparked online praise. Directed by renowned film-maker Zhang Yimou, the spectacular event showcased both China's ancient heritage and modern advancements. The author posits that social media users are hailing it as the pinnacle of Olympic ceremonies, citing its unmatched grandeur and impact. The ceremony also coincided with record-breaking performances by athletes like Michael Phelps and Usain Bolt, further cementing its iconic status. Thus, it stands as a standard over the 2024 Paris Olympics that is hugging headlines for wrong objectives. Desk underscores that additionally, the 2024 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony was marred by mistakes with country names, issues with raising the Olympic flag, and odd moments like a headless Marie Antoinette, the infamous Queen of France who was executed in 1793, singing.

Economic Times (2024) records that the Paris 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony faced criticism from French Bishops and conservatives for perceived mockery of Christianity and a “woke” spectacle featuring diverse and LGBTQ+ themes. Most spectators of the Olympics found it bloated and disjointed. The News Agency stipulates various personalities disapproving remark of the spectacle, to wit: French Bishop declared that it unfortunately included scenes of derision and mockery of Christianity; and that the excesses and provocation of the scenes of Jesus' Last Supper with his Apostles which began with a group of dancers and drag queens sitting in poses that recalled the event - set to music by lesbian activist DJ Barbara Butch that sat at the center with a silver headdress that resembled a halo, hurt Christians across the world. Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban railed against the opening ceremony's weakness and disintegration of the western world. Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman, Mark Zakharova denounced the show as a mockery of a sacred story for Christians, “and a giant gay parade” (p. 3).

Rashid (2024) enunciates that in a peculiar interview on the Fox Business Channel, Representative Ryan Zinke discussed the recent FBI confirmation that Donald Trump was indeed hit by a bullet during an assassination attempt in Pennsylvania earlier in July, 2024: Surprisingly, Zinke chose to link the incident to conservative's frustrations with the 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony, ergo; “Trump is as much of a movement as it is a candidate, because America is not comfortable where we are. We are not comfortable watching the Olympics disgusting, dishonourable display. We are not comfortable with the woke” (p. 1). Noteworthy, Rashid States that Thomas Jolly, the artistic director of the ceremony, defended the segment, stating that the intention was not to mock Christianity but to celebrate the Greek god Dionysus, highlighting France's cultural heritage. Thus, the ceremony aims to convey a message of inclusivity and artistic freedom. Nonetheless, Jolly and the Paris 2024 organizing committee issued apologies to those who were offended. The fact remains that the insulting cum vilifying satire of the depiction of Leonardo da Vinci's illustration of the Last supper of Jesus Christ and His apostles in the 2024 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony in Paris France, was premeditated and intended to prove a point in a derogatory, demeaning and provocative tone. This situation could have been avoided if they had embraced the spirit of Olympism along with religious tolerance.

Backlash related to the 2024 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony Pertinent to the vilifying Depiction of the Lord's Supper

Propper (2024) and the Feed (2024) articulate that the depiction of the Lord's Supper at the 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony was perceived as woke and a satire mocking the Lord's Supper. The controversy highlights the challenge of balancing artistic expression with respect for diverse religious sentiments in a global event.

Cherkaoui (2024) avers that it enraged nations and sparked global backlash. The author affirms that western nations, particularly the United States, were quick to react on the issue and perceived the act as an insult to Christianity, which was widely followed in a majority of countries in Europe and North America. Cherkaoui intimates that president Erdogan's conversation with Pope Francis underscores the gravity of the event's affront to sacred values: Affirming that 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony will be remembered not for its celebration of sport, but as a day that will live in infamy. Pope Francis and Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (cited by Cherkaoui) tagged the event as an immoral display. President Erdogan emphasized the need for a united front against actions that disparage sacred values, illuminating that human dignity was being trampled on, and religious and moral values were being mocked, offending both Muslims and Christians.

Furthermore, Cherkaoui (2024) enlightens that the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympic sparked reactions that ranged from shock to outright disgust. Pierre de Coubertin (cited by Cherkaoui) envisioned the Olympic Games as a celebration of sport and the unity of nations through athletic competition. According to the Olympic charter (Rule 50.2), cited by the author “no kind of political, religious, or racial demonstration or propaganda is permitted in any Olympic venue, site, or other location” (p. 3). However, the 2024 Paris ceremony starkly contrasted with these founding principles, representing a radical departure from the spirit of the Games.

Cherkaoui (2024) intimates that the demeaning depiction of the Lord's Supper at the 2024 opening ceremony of the Olympic Games made the world perceive France with contempt and disdain. It also exposed a profound disconnection between the French ruling elites and the rest of the world. The scene debasing Jesus Christ drew the most criticism, particularly from the US, and is no longer available on replay. Many televisions from Muslim countries also cut the parade's footage from their live broadcasts. This event obviously did a reputational damage on the person of the French president, Emmanuel Macron, who was associated with all the preparations. Cherkaoui observes that even Jacques Attali, who has long been associated with the circles of power in France, declared that history will judge the 2024 Olympic ceremony; adding in his words that “in 10 years, either these transgressions will have become natural and common place, or they will be felt as the measure of what 2024 was; a moment of decadence” (p.5). Such a statement highlights the event's divisive nature and its intended outcome. Cherkaoui concludes that the ceremony ultimately reflects the French ruling elite's worldview, infused with sexual depravity, Satanistic rituals, and anti-religious themes.

Revell (2024) and Cherkaoui (2024) asserts that the 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony's representation of Jesus Christ was deeply shocking, implying a global debasement of Christianity. Thus, some multimedia companies and sponsors pulled their support for the 2024 Olympic Games. This act already proved costly, with United States advertising and sponsoring contracts being canceled, leading to significant financial losses for the Olympic committee, particularly the French Olympic committee. The authors equally report that C Spire, a tech and telecommunications company based in Ridgeland, Mississippi, wrote in a post on X that they were shocked by the mockery of the Last Supper during the opening ceremonies of the Paris Olympics, and that they have already pulled their advertisements and support. C Spire CEO, Suzy Hays (cited by Revell) specifically declared in his words:

C Spire is supportive of our athletes who have worked so hard to be a part of the Olympics. However, we will not be a part of the offensive and unacceptable mockery of the Last Supper, which is why we are pulling advertising from the Olympics. (p. 2).

Ultimately, another backlash of the seditious display of the Lord's Supper at the 2024 Olympics Games held in Paris, France is that major world religions apart from Christianity opposed and condemned it. Quinones (2024) posits that Iran and Turkey's top leaders, along with other prominent Muslim figures, strongly condemned the recent portrayal of the last supper during the Paris Olympics opening ceremony. They argue that the performance, which features drag queens, was deeply disrespectful to Jesus Christ, a revered figure in Islam. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (cited by Quinones), declares that insulting religious figures is unacceptable, and that Muslims hold Jesus in high esteem. Keller (2024) also stresses that Al-Azhar, the top institution of the Sunni branch of Islam in Egypt, strongly criticized the portrayal of Jesus Christ in the event. They express that Al-Azhar, and nearly 2 billion Muslims behind it, argue that the depiction was deeply offensive and disrespectful to the billions of Muslims worldwide who view Jesus as a revered prophet. The author highlights that the Muslim Council of Elders Grand Imam of Al-Azhar emphasized that Muslims believe that Jesus is a messenger of God, as described in the Quran. They equally called for respect for religious beliefs and condemned any attempt to demean sacred figures.

Moreover, Cebi (2024) and Cherkaoui (2024) note that even some French elites and Christians like the catholic church of France, Marion Marechal, Fabrice di Vizio, Jean-Luc Melanchon, alongside Bishop Robert Barron from Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta, perceived the depiction of the Lord's supper at the 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony as a satire mocking Christianity: They hence, condemned it since it includes numerous references to Satanism. Changing God's creation and reversing it as enthroned in transsexualism is considered by many as a form of Satanism because it is both an inversion of God's creation and a societal confusion. Thus the authors posit that from this perspective, some Christians condemned the last Supper scene at the 2024 Olympics' Opening Ceremony as truly Satanic. Similarly, they aver that the theme of pedophile-Satanism, accompanied by frightened children, nods to the last phase of the dechristianization of the west.

The Interfaith Dialogue Theory

Napier (2011) illuminates that Interfaith Dialogue Theory refers to a framework or approach that facilitates conversations and interactions between people of different religious traditions and beliefs. The goal is to promote understanding, build relationships and acquire new knowledge by engaging with the perspectives and experiences of the “other”, or those who hold religious or spiritual views.

Kung (1991) who is a Swiss Catholic theologian as well as a notable proponent of the Interfaith Dialogue Theory in the 20th century; argues for the necessity of interfaith dialogue and mutual respect among different religious traditions as part of a global ethical framework. His work was influential in shaping contemporary interfaith dialogue practices. Kung strongly believes that interfaith dialogue is the foundation for global peace alongside religious tolerance. He asseverates that there will be no peace among the nations without peace among diverse religions in the world: In the same vein, there will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the peculiar religions. Orton (2016) contends that Interfaith Dialogue Theory involves cooperative, constructive, and positive engagement between individuals or groups from different religious traditions, spiritual practices, or humanistic beliefs, occurring at both personal and institutional levels. This implies that the theory is a deliberate process of respectful interaction between people of diverse faiths or beliefs. It aims to foster understanding, cooperation, and positive relationships both in personal and organization or community level.

Academy for Cultural Diplomacy (2024) enunciates that Interfaith Dialogue Theory is essentially a positive and cooperative conversation between people from different religion. It focuses on building bridges of understanding and respect. The academy posits that it converges people to share their beliefs, and work together to create a more harmonious world. The institute illustrates that it involves; open-mindedness, which is being willing to listen and learn about different perspectives; mutual respect, which reflects valuing each other's belief without judgment; cooperation, which hinges on working together to find common ground and address shared challenges; together with tolerance, which highlights accepting differences and living peacefully alongside people with different belief.

It is important to note that interfaith dialogue is not about converting others or claiming superiority of one religion over another; it is about recognizing the richness and diversity of human spirituality. In this context, the directors of the 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony in Paris, France erred and fumbled. They should have sought various means rather than disrespecting and downplaying the Christian Lord's Supper, to showcase their so-called inclusivity mindset. It is wrong to promote a perceived idea by undermining someone's deeply revered faith and beliefs. Interfaith dialogue theory emphasizes mutual respect and understanding among different religious traditions. By fostering open communication and collaboration between faith leaders prior to the 2024 Olympic Opening Ceremony, a more inclusive approach could have been adopted. This would involve recognizing and accommodating diverse religious practices, thereby preventing the demeaning representation of the Christian Lord's supper. Such dialogue ensures that all religious symbols and rituals are treated with dignity, promoting harmony and reducing the likelihood of offending any faith community. Besides true religion does not promote moral decadence and evil; thus no one should reckon homosexuality and LGBTQ inclinations as religious since they reflect morally debased and detestable acts.

The Ethical Implications of Mocking the Christian Lord's Supper During the 2024 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony

The ethical implications of mocking the Last Supper during the 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony are multifaceted and revolve around respect for religious beliefs, freedom of expression, cultural sensitivity, and the impact on public perception among others. They are delineated as follows:

- **Respect for religious beliefs:** One significant ethical concern is the potential disrespect shown towards Christian beliefs. “The Last Supper” is a deeply revered image in Christianity, and any perceived mockery can be seen as offensive and blasphemous. This can hurt the sentiments of millions of Christians globally, leading to feeling of alienation and disrespect.
- **Freedom of expression:** On the other hand, the defense of the ceremony centers on artistic freedom and the right to creative expression. Thomas Jolly and the organizers emphasized their intention to celebrate cultural heritage and inclusivity, not to mock any religious symbols. This raises the ethical question of balancing freedom of artistic expression with respect for religious sentiments. It behooves that art aficionados, artists and creative's should always be wary of crossing ethical boundaries in their creativity pertinent to religious expressions. Their shows should center or secular activities in a way that will not be a mockery of people's cultural norms and heritage particularly at public events.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** The incident highlights the need for cultural sensitivity, especially in global events like the Olympics, which have a diverse audience. Artists and organizers must consider the global impact of their work and strive to avoid offending different

cultural and religious groups. This includes understanding the potential for misinterpretation and the consequences of controversial artistic choices.

- **Impact on public perception:** The backlash also affects the public perception of the Olympics as an inclusive and unifying event. Controversies can overshadow the sporting achievements and the spirit of the games, potentially leading to decreased viewership and support from certain groups. Ethical considerations must include the broader impact on the event's reputation and the message it sends to the world.
- **Dialogue and reconciliation:** The incident presents an opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation between different cultural and religious groups. Addressing the controversy through open discussion can foster understanding and respect. Acknowledging mistakes and issuing sincere apologies, assuming the organizers apology is genuine, are crucial steps towards mending relationships and demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and respect.
- **Corporate and sponsorship reactions:** The ethical implications extend to corporate sponsors and advertisers. For instance, the withdrawal of advertising by C Spire reflects the economic consequences of controversial actions. Companies must weigh their support for freedom of expression against their responsibility to their customer base, which may include individuals with strong religious beliefs.
- **Global event responsibility:** Since the Olympic Game is a global event, the organizers have a heightened responsibility to ensure that their actions do not alienate or offend any part of their diverse audience. This involves being mindful of the diverse cultural and religious landscape of the global community and striving to create a unifying experience that respects all perspectives.

Essentially, while artistic freedom is crucial, it must be balanced with a deep respect for religious and cultural beliefs to foster a truly inclusive environment. The ethical implications highlight the importance of sensitivity and careful consideration in global cultural expression.

Strategies to Avert Similar Occurrences pertinent to the satirical mockery of the Lord's Supper in subsequent Olympic Games

To avert subsequent occurrences of controversies similar to the mockery of The Last Supper at the 2024 Olympic opening ceremony, organizers can implement the following strategies:

- **Avoiding the use of satire when reflecting on sensitive issues like religious and cultural symbols:** Avoiding the use of satire when reflecting on sensitive issues like religious and cultural symbols is crucial to maintaining respect and fostering understanding. Satire, while powerful in critiquing societal flaws, can easily cross into disrespect or offence when applied to deeply held beliefs. These symbols often carry profound meaning and significance for individuals and communities, and mocking or trivializing them can lead to unnecessary conflict, misunderstandings, and alienation. By refraining from satirical approaches in these contexts, it creates a space for more thoughtful, respectful, and constructive dialogue, which is essential for coexistence in a diverse global space.
- **Comprehensive review process:** It is fundamental to establish a diverse and inclusive committee to review all artistic content for potential cultural and religious sensitivities. This committee should include representatives from various cultural and religious backgrounds to ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered. Their role would be to identify and address any elements that could be perceived as offensive or inappropriate.
- **Cultural sensitivity training:** It is essential to provide thorough cultural sensitivity training for all individuals involved in the creative process. This training should cover the

importance of respecting diverse cultures and religious beliefs, and provide guidelines on how to avoid misrepresentation or stereotyping.

- **Clear guidelines and policies:** It is necessary to provide clear guidelines and policies regarding the portrayal of religious and cultural symbols. These guidelines should be communicated to all creative teams, emphasizing the importance of sensitivity and respect.
- **Engagement with religious and cultural experts:** Religious and cultural experts should be consulted during the planning and development stages of the event content. Their insights can help identify potential issues and provide guidance on how to present themes in a respectful manner.
- **Scenario planning:** Scenario planning should always be conducted in the face of global sporting events like the Olympic Games to anticipate potential backlash and prepare appropriate responses. This includes developing a communication strategy that addresses possible misunderstandings or offenses and outlines steps for immediate resolution.

Proactive measures from organizers as outlined above can effectively address and prevent controversies, thereby cultivating a more inclusive and respectful atmosphere at the Olympics and similar large-scale events.

Conclusion

The intersection of art, religion, and global events like the Olympics presents a complex terrain where freedom of expression and religious sensitivity often collide. While satire can be a potent tool for social critique, it must be exercised with respect for diverse beliefs. The 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony underscored this tension, revealing the challenges of balancing artistic license with the avoidance of religious offense. Finding common ground requires employing the basic tenets of Interfaith Dialogue Theory alongside the strategies for averting subsequent similar occurrences as already enunciated in this study.

Be that as it may, this study is limited by its focus on a single event. A broader examination of satire across different cultures and time periods would provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact. Additionally, quantifying the precise effects of satirical content on religious tolerance remains difficult due to the subjective nature of perception and the multitude of factors influencing attitudes.

Ultimately, this research highlights the need for continued exploration of the ethical dimensions of artistic expression in an increasingly interconnected world. Through fostering dialogue between artists, religious leaders, and the public, it is possible to navigate these complexities and create a space where satire can thrive without compromising religious harmony.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby proffered in view of the findings of this study:

1. Inordinate and salacious lifestyles should not be legalized in any country. Legalizing such lifestyles fosters the popular opinion that they are acceptable alternative lifestyles and, therefore, an acceptable religious virtue. Lascivious and overindulgent lifestyles do not constitute any religious tenet, as every religion promotes good virtues.
2. People should refrain from imposing their lecherous and turpitudinous ideals on public gatherings, particularly through mockery-oriented satirical artistic expressions; as such acts often alienate and offend rather than inspire constructive dialogue. Such expressions

can undermine the diversity of thought and experience within a community, fostering division rather than mutual respect and understanding. Public spaces thrive on inclusivity and respect, and artistic expressions should aim to enrich rather than belittle the varied perspectives that coexist within society. Respecting the boundaries of others' beliefs and lifestyles is essential to maintaining a harmonious and respectful environment for all.

3. Religious adherents should not be overly fixated on protecting their faith against perceived devaluations, as this can lead to unnecessary conflict and distraction from the core tenets of their beliefs. Instead, they should cultivate the wisdom to discern when it is more beneficial to ignore certain issues, understanding that the strength of faith lies not in constant defense, but in embodying its principles with grace and resilience. In doing so, they maintain the integrity of their beliefs while promoting a peaceful coexistence with others.
4. Christian churches should not be targeted for destructive criticisms or any form of mockery because they mean no harm neither are they the root causes of societal issues. Christian evangelists just like other secular celebrities like musicians and great motivational speakers are successful alongside attracting global audiences and filling stadiums cum auditoriums, earmarking excellence in their various fields. Christianity is not responsible for failures in other areas of global institutions or endeavours: They should not equally be subjected to embrace deplorable lifestyles to exhibit inclusivity and liberality. That should constitute compromising of their faith's standard and core intrinsic values. Instead of criticizing Christianity, people should strive for excellence in their own fields along with making remarkable impacts in their peculiar perceived life choices as a mode of convincing others to embrace their stance. They should contribute to societal progress, demonstrating that it is possible for every sector and life pattern to thrive simultaneously in the global space.

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